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Laboring forward?

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There is no broad resurgence of the US labor movement. But when you've been pushed back on your heels as much as unions in this country have been, you'll take all the good news you can find. And today's *Globe* reports that labor has, in fact, been on something of a run in the Boston area.

The story is centered on the settlement this week of a nearly three-week strike by dining service workers at **Harvard University**.

The workers, members of Unite Here Local 26, were well paid for their industry -- earning an average of nearly $22 an hour -- but they were facing increases in their health care costs that would have effectively eaten into their pay. What's more, they were being paid well by an institution that happens to be the world's wealthiest university.

The tentative agreement reached early Tuesday morning, which still must be ratified today, calls for no increases in employee health care contributions, a guaranteed minimum full-time salary of $35,000 a year, and some compensation for those laid off over the summer.

The idea that the university could part with little of its $35 billion so that lower-paid workers might have a slightly easier time shouldering the region's high cost

of living was a hard one to argue against.

"Harvard has a $35 billion endowment. Its dining hall workers are on strike for a $35,000 minimum salary," **read the headline** on one story.

Smoke and mirrors

The *Globe* says it's the fourth time in recent months that labor has emerged victorious from a standoff with management. It cites recent showdowns involving Verizon workers, nurses at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and office building janitors.

The Harvard dining workers had plenty of people on their side -- and visibility because of their name-brand employer that put the wind at their backs.

On Monday, *The Harvard Crimson* reported, about 500 students walked out of classes in support of the strike, with about 100 students staging a sit-in in the lobby of the building where negotiations were taking place.

One dining service worker at Harvard's school of public health, **Rosa Ines Rivera**, landed an op-ed in *New York Times.* Rivera wrote that she serves meals to people who helped write the Affordable Care Act -- but won't be able to afford the health plan she said Harvard wanted its dining service workers to accept.

Others pointed to a certain irony that a university swimming in riches recently announced it received a $10 million donation to conduct new research on poverty. A *Globe* editorial cited the gift in backing the striking workers. "There's no time like the present to model good policy in the real world," it said, declaring, "A living wage is an important part of the regional economy."

Unions have been a long slide down in this country. As the *Globe* reports, just over 1 in 10 US workers now belongs to a union. Fifty years ago that figure was nearly 1 of every 3 workers.

While the string of recent labor victories in the Boston area is noteworthy, looming large is the ongoing battle over privatization efforts at the MBTA. Public sector workers are the last solid front of the US labor movement, so the stakes are particularly high. The T has already moved to outsource its money-counting operation, and there is now talk of doing the same with some bus routes.

Unlike the case with Harvard or well-heeled downtown building owners whose towers gleam thanks to a late-night army of janitors, the T is operating with a finite bucket of public dollars.

Harvard dining service workers, downtown janitors, and others who form the lower-paid service workforce -- the sector unions are counting on for growth -- all depend on reliable public transportation. Without more money put into the system, T managers are arguing that they need to look to every efficiency possible -- including outsourcing -- to keep the trains and buses moving. That makes the labor issues there more complicated than those playing out in the private sector.

Still, say union leaders, all the conflicts ultimately have in common a goal of preserving a fragile

middle class or helping those trying desperately to climb onto its lowest rungs. And there's one further reason to believe those connections will be made clear as privatization talk continues at the T: the president of Unite Here Local 26, **Brian Lang**, is the labor representative on the five-member MBTA control board now in charge of the agency.

--MICHAEL JONAS

BEACON HILL

The consulting firm helmed by Gov. **Charlie Baker's** chief campaign strategist, **Will Keyser**, has become a key behind-the-scenes presence on behalf of a range of clients, including the commuter rail company **Keolis** and the campaign to expand charter schools. (*Boston Globe*)

Lawmakers led by Rep. **Russell Holmes** of Mattapan say the state is facing a crisis of growing teenage homelessness. (*Boston Herald*)

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

A city watchdog says proceeds from Boston's sale of the **WInthrop Square garage** are required to go into the city's surplus property fund, but a city official says it's not yet clear where the estimated $51 million will land. (*Boston Herald*)

Westford residents call out town officials at a public meeting for settling a long-running dispute with an asphalt company by allowing the firm to open a plant in town. (*Lowell Sun*)

Westport residents and lawmakers are outraged after learning about 70 animals are being brought into a farm where officials had to remove more than 1,400 animals this past summer because of wretched conditions, a number of which died. (*Standard-Times*)

Abington police have issued a temporary ban -- likely not enforceable -- on purchases by anyone under the age of 18 of household items that can be used in Halloween pranks such as eggs, soap, toilet paper, and shaving cream. (*The Enterprise*)

WASHINGTON/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Arizona Sheriff **Joe Arpaio** is slapped with a contempt charge for immigration patrols. (*Time*)

RELIGION

The Vatican has clarified guidelines for the cremated remains of loved ones, saying the ashes should not be spread "in the air, on land, at sea, or in some other way," or left in homes, but rather should be buried in cemeteries or some other sacred ground. (*New York Times*)

ELECTIONS

Gov. **Charlie Baker** goes door-knocking in Dorchester to drum up support for Question 2, which would lift the cap on charter schools. (*Boston Herald*)

A *Herald* editorial urges a "no" vote on Question 4, which would legalize marijuana.

The hostility in the **Barnstable County sheriff**'s race rose to a new level as a supporter of challenger **Randy Azzato** found the windshields smashed and tires slashed of two vehicles in his driveway at his home in Sandwich. **Keith Gould** says the vandalism was in retaliation for his taking pictures of Sheriff **James Cummings** using a federally funded radiation-detecting boat to ferry friends and colleagues to a Martha's Vineyard party. (*Cape Cod Times*)

Senate Minority Leader **Bruce Tarr** promised Cape voters he would appoint **Anthony Schiavi** to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security if Schiavi is elected, although with only six other Republicans in the 40-person Senate, there wouldn't be much of a battle for the post. (*Cape Cod Times*) The *Globe* endorses Schiavi's opponent, Democrat **Julian Cyr** in the race for the open seat.

Should **Hillary Clinton** win the White House, it's unlikely to be in a "landslide," despite all the talk of her big lead. (*Boston Globe*)

As his poll numbers continue to decline, **Donald Trump** has taken to dragging reporters to his branded properties in what appears to be promotional tours for his post-election business rather than politicking for votes. (*New York Times*)

Newly released results from an annual poll shows most Americans don't see the glass as half-empty or half-full but rather think there's something wrong with the water. A majority of voters, particularly **white Evangelicals**, think the country's best days have passed, with many believing the peak was in the era of Elvis, the Cold War, and legal segregation. (*U.S. News & World Report*)

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

The **Webster Health Board** issues a cease and desist order against a lakefront home being rented on Airbnb and says the state Department of Public Health "has determined that lodging provided through Airbnb or similar online services is subject to local licensure and permitting as a lodging house or bed and breakfast, in the same manner as traditional lodging houses and and bed and breakfast establishments are licensed or permitted."

A Tennessee Circuit Court judge ruled a **Nashville** ordinance that limited homeowners from renting out their rooms, apartments, and houses through apps such as Airbnb is unconstitutional. (*National Review*)

Google's fiber optic business -- the wiring of cities and towns -- is being slowed as the company reassesses its strategy. (*Governing*)

Fundraising for the **Clinton Foundation** fell $57 million in 2015, a drop of nearly 36 percent. (*Chronicle of Philanthropy*)

EDUCATION

More than half of **Boston** schools don't have a working library. (*Greater Boston*)

Quincy police are investigating a school bus crash that injured five students when the bus veered off a road and struck a fire hydrant, telephone pole, and an SUV before hitting a house. (*Patriot Ledger*)

Hudson School Superintendent **Jodi Fortuna** is stepping down at the end of the school year but gave no reason why she's leaving the post after three years. (*MetroWest Daily News*) In its Summer issue, *CommonWealth* examined the constant churn of superintendents in the state.

HEALTH/HEALTH CARE

Health care costs are gobbling up an increasing share of families' income. (*Boston Globe*)

The maker of **OxyContin** worked to block efforts in West Virginia to limit prescriptions for the potent drug at the start of what has become a national opioid abuse epidemic. (STAT)

TRANSPORTATION

In two months, MassDOT has handed out 151,000 **transponders** as the agency prepares to move to electronic tolling this weekend. (Masslive)

The 31-year-old **Stoughton** woman who drove her car the wrong way on Interstate 495 and killed herself and four young men when she slammed into their vehicle had a record of speeding, having been ticketed five times in the last 11 years. (*The Enterprise*)

ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT

After a joint bidding process, **Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island** select seven wind and solar deals. (*CommonWealth*)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE/COURTS

Lowell District Court Judge **Thomas Brennan** banned public defenders from working in his drug court, which has prompted legal pushback from the group representing public defenders. The case, which seems to revolve around a personality dispute that escalated, is now going to the Supreme Judicial Court. (*Lowell Sun*)

Springfield NAACP President **Talbert Swan** calls a police review board a "paper tiger." (MassLive)

MEDIA

Newt Gingrich and Fox's **Megyn Kelly** go at it over the media's preoccupation with sex. (*Washington Post*)

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